

Bush River Community Council

October 15, 2012 Meeting Minutes

The October 2012 meeting of the Bush River Community Council (BRCC) was called to order by the Chairman, Larry Carmichael, at 6:35 p.m. in the Anita C. Leight Estuary Center large meeting room, Otter Point Road, Abingdon, MD, on October 15, 2012. In attendance were Harford County Councilpersons Mary Ann Lisanti and Dion Guthrie; a representative from State Senator Nancy Jacobs Office, Mike Kalinski; Captain Christopher Swain from Harford County Sheriff's Office and a Legal Aid for Harford County Council, Jamie Meier. Ms Rebecca Jessop from the Center for Performing Arts was present. Bush River Community Council Board members in attendance were: Chairman Larry Carmichael, Recording Secretary Mary Starks, Kathleen Leary, Glenn Dudderar, and Jo Wanda Lucas. Board members Vice Chairman Randy Conlon, John Paff, Harry Webster, Jr, were absent from the meeting. Three members of the Bush River community attended.

Chairman Carmichael welcomed everyone and thanked all for coming. The final Minutes from the September meeting were staffed as agreed upon then approved by the Board electronically.

Harford County Sheriff's Report

Captain Swain discussed the burglaries throughout the county which are up by 19% in the Bush River area over last year. He reported that they have captured and charged a homeless man with a string of commercial burglaries which should impact those statistics. The northern part of Harford County has a higher increase in reports of burglaries. He emphasized again that often doors or windows are left unlocked and he cautioned everyone to lock doors and windows in homes and cars consistently. Robberies are down by 50% and auto theft is down as well.

He briefly addressed the successful drug bust that recently occurred in Harford County which reached as far as Georgia and said that, based on his experience, there is usually a lull in activity when leaders in the illegal drug industry are arrested and incarcerated as it takes a while for inexperienced leaders to become capable of replacing them. He expects federal charges for racketeering could be as much as 10 years in some cases and often incarceration occurs at institutions out of state. He could not add much to the reported action since the case is still active. In discussing gangs in Harford County, he mentioned that the "Crips" are generally associated with the Aberdeen end of Rt. 40 while the "Bloods" are generally associated with the Edgewood end of Rt. 40. Capt. Swain explained that many of the individuals charged in the recent drug investigation are associated with the "WMD" (World's Most Dangerous), a gang that originated in Edgewood and has ties to the Crip gang.

Agenda presentation on the Harford County Task Force on Obesity Report

Councilwoman Lisanti gave a very informative and disconcerting report on the outcome of the yearlong task force on Obesity in Harford County. The report from the 15 member group has several recommendations supported by some surprising and dismaying issues especially regarding the education environment. The effort was focused on educating the public about the public health crisis and its various causes, assuring all citizens have access to healthy foods and exercise, and encouraging participation and public support for recommendations. Statistics which document that obesity is at a crisis level were obtained from medical doctors throughout the county. The goals are to provide access to healthy food and exercise, to build an environment in which diet and exercise are important, and to

promote and maintain community engagement.

Recommendations include: establishment of Harford County Wellness Commission; support of school wellness programs (reevaluate the profit made from selling low nutrition/high calorie snacks at the expense of the health of children); promote the Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan; advertise the county's multi-modal active transportation – citizens must walk to get to the bus stops; encourage active movement – stairs, walking trails, advertise opportunities, implement the Land Preservation plan for parks and recreation; present a unified message about the crisis; establish a healthy designation program where restaurants that include healthy meals on their menus are awarded the designation and given notoriety of the award; and sustain all of the initiatives as an on-going program.

A sobering concern raised was the statistic that because of the rise in obesity in our children, this generation may be the first not to outlive their parents. There was a discussion about issues such as school lunches, sale of low nutrition/high calorie snacks, soda machines and in some cases lack of physical education/exercise. Some schools have only 1 hour of recess for students per week. It was recognized that there are wonderful swimming, soccer and other competitive sports programs in the county, but they are often expensive to enroll in and not every child has the opportunity to participate. The council discussed inviting a member of the Board of Education to attend a meeting to address some of the concerns raised in this presentation and among attendees. Councilwoman Lisanti said she will keep the council apprised of the progress and outcome of the report.

Agenda presentation on the Center for Performing Arts

Ms. Rebecca Jessop presented the short version of a presentation on this subject with a promise to return at a later meeting with the full version with pictures and graphics. She provided a map showing the area of land bequeathed to Harford County by Mrs. Emily Bayless Graham estate. It consists of two large parcels of land: one between 924 and 24 beginning at Wheel Road below Festival Shopping Center and the other between 24 and Tollgate Road also beginning at Wheel Road. The first parcel will be devoted to passive recreation (walking trails, nature walks, etc) and the second (41 Acres) will become home to the Center for Performing Arts. Work has begun with H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture (a New York firm which specializes in the design of cultural centers) to develop a Master Plan and Conceptual Design for the site. It will provide a performing arts facility including a theater/auditorium, class rooms and conference or gathering centers to house performances and educational facilities for dance, theater, music, all forms of art media. Studies have shown that aside from the sheer joy art brings, students who study the arts perform 30% better scholastically than those who do not. The stipulation in the will is that building must be substantially completed within 7 years from January 2012) or the land will revert back to the estate. The council was provided with a list of frequently asked questions, a brochure on membership and support for the center and a copy of the map showing the planned location. Harford County will own the land and the facility and provide 1/3 of the funding. The state of Maryland is expected to provide another 1/3 and the Center for Performing Arts must raise the final 1/3. For those who are interested, one way citizens can support this effort is to join the Center for an annual membership fee of \$25 or \$20 for seniors, students and teachers and \$40 for families. Benefits of joining also include newsletters, updates on progress, special member events, and more...available email: info@CenterfortheArtsHarford.org, web site: www.centerfortheartsharford.org or phone: 410-838-2177. The Center is currently located in Tudor Hall at 17 Tudor Lane, Bel Air, MD 21015. Ms Jessop said she will come to a future meeting to present the longer version with pictures and plans for the new Center.

Update on Perrywood Garden Apartments issues.

The Chairman discussed the informative and well-attended walk-through of the apartment complex with Tryko Partners, the new owner representative, Mr. Gold, and Ms. Amina Williams, the manager of the complex. Ms. Williams attended this council meeting and was very helpful in providing the latest scheduled actions planned by the owner to address the problems that are identified below. She plans to attend the monthly BRCC meetings to facilitate cooperation among all parties and to communicate planned and accomplished improvements to the quality of life for the residents of Perrywood. There was a discussion of issues and concerns including mold, leaking sewage pipes and bat infestation.

With no further topics, questions or issues raised, Chairman Carmichael thanked all attendees for coming, and adjourned the meeting at 8: 35 pm.

Submitted by:

Mary Starks

Secretary, Bush River Community Council